TL6502-02

E. TIMOR UPDATE

A Publication of the EAST TIMOR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Resolution on East Timor in Senate & House

On April 28th Representative Tony Hall (D-Ohio) and Senator Paul Tsongas (D-Mass) introduced a concurrent resolution on East Timor into the United States House and Senate. The resolution expresses the sense of Congress on the current situation in East Timor, and is meant to call on President Reagan to take "all appropriate measures to encourage" open access to the territory, renewed emigration, and negotiations to bring about Indonesia's withdrawl and the free exercise of the people's right to self-determination.

In 1980 Congress passed section 408 of PL 96-533 which contained statements about the Congress' concern for East Timor. While the Hall/ Tsongas resolution is similar, it goes further in its call to President Reagan to work towards self-determination, a reversal of U.S. policy. Referring to the recent events in the Falkland Islands, and other such cases, Rep. Hall noted that the U.S. should seek an end to the military occupation of East Timor and not turn its back on Indonesia's forcible assimilation of the East Timorese people and national identity.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

By significantly extending the pressure on the U.S. governemnt to abandon its appalling policies, and continuing to bring the facts to a larger public, one can contribute materially to the survival of the people of East Timor. It is rare that an opportunity arises in which a relatively small amount of effort may save thousands of lives, and it would be criminal to allow it to pass.

—Noam Chomsky

At the present, there is no indication as to when the House/Senate resolution will come up for a vote. However, it is still very important that both of your Senators and your Congressperson know how you feel about this. As always the best way to let them know is by calling them or writing them in Washington-they like to hear from the 'folks at home'. A simple note saying your want them to cosponsor, or support the resolution is probably enough, but you could use the opportunity to relay your knowledge and concern about the situation. The normal address format is below.

It is extremely important, as Noam Chomsky notes, to spread concern about East Timor. One means to do this is to give copies of this ACTION ALERT to your friends and organizational contacts. If your organization has a newsletter, make sure you remember to put a note in about these resolutions and urge people to get in touch with their representatives (if people need more information have them write the ETHRC.)

Representative/Senator _____
United States Congress
Washington D.C. 20515

FIND OUT THE FACTS AND EXPRESS YOUR VIEW!

NEW The ETHRC has just issued a postcard set on East Timor. The six ca set is educational, challenging and a great consciousness raising tool. This is a very powerful way to inform your representatives in Washington, and elsewhere, about your stand on East Timor. Six cards per set (75¢ per set - 10 sets for $6 - 20 sets for$10.)

Resolution on East Timor

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION WITH RESPECT TO EAST TIMOR

S. CON. RES. 87/ H. CON. RES. 321

Whereas many tens of thousands of East Timorese have died, either directly as a result of military operations or from consequent famine and disease, since the invasion and occupation of East Timor by the Government of Indonesia;

Whereas the threat of serious food shortages and continued medical problems persists in East Timor;

Whereas reports of violations of human rights in East Timor continue to be brought to international attention;

Whereas many hundreds of East Timorese have been prevented from emigrating from East Timor;

Whereas the Government of Indonesia has strictly limited access to East Timor and the free flow of information from the territory;

Whereas the people of East Timor have not been permitted to freely exercise their right of political self-determination recognized under the United Nations Charter; and

Whereas since 1975 the United Nations General Assembly has consistently condemned Indonesia's unilateral annexation of East Timor: Now, therefore, be it *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that the President should take all appropriate measures to—

(1) encourage the Government of Indonesia to allow appropriate international relief agencies increased access to East Timor and to allow such agencies to establish full-time humanitarian relief operations in East Timor;

(2) encourage and assist the Governments of Indonesia, Portugal, and Australia to facilitate the reunification of families separated because of development in East Timor, and encourage the involvement of appropriate international agencies in this process;

(3) encourage the Government of Indonesia to allow free access to East Timor by international journalists and international human rights organizations; and

(4) encourage the Government of Indonesia to agree to negotiations through which Indonesian troops will be withdrawn from East Timor and the poeple of East Timor will be permitted to freely exercise their internationally recognized right to self-determination.●

SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Senate shall transmit a copy of this concurrent resolution to the President.

E Timor UPDATE ACTION ALERTS are published as part of E Timor UPDATE, the quarterly newsletter of the East Timor Human Rights Committee, whenever events arise that necessitate urgent response from its readers. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions please send them to the ETHRC. For a list of resources, or a free copy of E Timor UPDATE contact ETHRC - BOX 363 Clinton Station - Syracuse, NY 13201. The ETHRC is an independent affiliate of Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC).

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